NORTH Bi NORTHWEST

Newsletter of the Seattle Bisexual Women's Network, a member project of Gay Community Social Services

June-July, 1997 $2.50 *Volume 10, Issue 1*

Be Proud! Simple...Right?

By Sheri

Pride Day is rapidly approaching and again I contemplate the concept of "Pride." What does it mean? Why is my answer different every year? Many of us struggle with similar questions: How visible is visible? How do I balance Queer pride with pride in the other aspects of my life? Must I educate others every day? Is my sexual orientation anybody's business anyway? Is THIS battle worth THIS today? What exactly am I "proud" about? Am I ever "out" enough?

I believe "pride" is not a static state of being but a lifelong personal path. I challenge each of you contemplate how you travel your path. I know there are many out there who say "I live my life, I do my thing, It's my business." However, I propose that of all approaches that can be the most dangerous. As Queer people we must go down that road. Usually, we find ourselves traveling without a good map. We ought to at least be aware of what our individual path looks like.

I started down my path in a small town in Central Virginia. I was self-employed and working with children in conservative counties. Needless to say, I was a far cry from "out" (wherever that was). Likewise, I come from a deeply religious background - "no sexual relations until you are married" (to a man, of course). I struggled with admitting to myself that I was Bi much less telling my family. Hey, I dated a woman for four months before I realized I wasn't just an open-minded straight person!

A year passed before I told my mother and siblings.At my mother's request, I didn't tell my father. Mom wasn't joining P-FLAG, but at least she wasn't disowning me. She even still welcomed my lovers into the house (as long as we slept in separate bedrooms). So I was content...wasn't I? I was busy building Bi pride in the queer community - but afraid to touch my female partner at the grocery store.

I was so busy "walking my path" I never stopped to really look at it. Oh sure, maybe a quick glance now and then, but my route only seemed hard, not oppressive. Luckily, I was accepted to a graduate program here at the UW and was able to "COME OUT WEST" as it were. Suddenly I was free! It was not until then that I was able to look back and examine the path behind me. Gazing back down it, I was pained to see how dark and narrow it was. My fear darkened the road behind me like an ominous thundercloud. Had I really been so afraid?! How could I not have realized it? Well, no matter, I thought to myself. I'm here, I'm Queer-quick I will drag out my queer T-shirts, put stickers on my car, hold her hand and kiss in public! I'm free!...aren't I?

After two years in Seattle, the fear of being seen in public is a distant memory. So, who needs to stop and inspect their path? Mine is in the sun now, that is all that matters...right? Then Pride Day comes along and I begin to think again. Wait! What is that dark line tracing down my sunny path?

Looking back I realize that my pride in being "Bi" is deeply tied to the vagaries of my general self-esteem. Especially as women, we are not taught to love and be proud of ourselves. For many, a positive self-esteem is something

Continued on Page 3

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North Bi Northwest is the bimonthly newsletter of the Seattle Bisexual Women's Network. It is produced by women and is feminist in content. We feature news and events pertinent to the bisexual community, plus creative writing, artwork, and an advice column.

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We welcome submissions from women and men that concern feminism, politics, sexuality, or anything of interest to bisexual women. Help define our culture! Share your histories, anger, pleasure, energy. Send us your essays, poetry, photographs, drawings, book reviews, short stories, interviews, media reports, rants, cartoons, erotica, journals, theory, conversations and letters. You're important to us and what you have to say is important to everyone.

We accept submissions on disk with hard copy (PC), typed, legibly handwritten or by E-mail (nbinw@aol.com). If you send us something to print, you get a free issue; send six and get a year's subscription! Let us know what pseudonym you use, if you do not want to publish under your everyday name.

Views expressed in *North Bi Northwest* are those of the individual authors and do not necessarily *represent the views of SBWN. Inclusion in this publication does not indicate author's sexual orientation.*

Deadline for submissions to the new issue: July 15, 1997.

North Bi Northwest *is printed on bi paper! (50% recycled)*

SBWN Statement of Purpose

We are a group of women from diverse backgrounds working to create a feminist bisexual support network. We promote, in both the heterosexual world and in the lesbian/gay community, the understanding and acceptance of bisexuality as one of many valid sexual identities.

We regard ourselves as part of the community united against heterosexism and homophobia. We are dedicated to the right of all people to define their own sexuality, free from any social, political, or economic coercion. The discriminations we face based on our gender and our sexuality are not the only forms of oppression. We recognize that oppression is non-hierarchical and that none of us is free until all of us are free. We have invested ourselves in the feminist struggle to transform our culture into one free of all forms of bigotry, hatred, and exploitation.

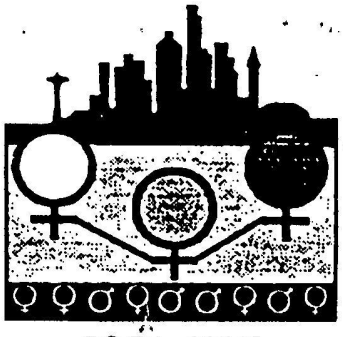
We seek to provide a safe place for women to explore all aspects of their sexual orientation and identity. All women are welcome to attend SBWN activities. We are exclusively a women's group in order to create a safe space for women's expression and leadership. We come together to affirm ourselves and our choices.

North Bi Northwest

Editorial Team:
Cyprienne Schroeppel, Lizabeth Coller, and other volunteers

Distribution:
Bettykay, K Zimmer, and volunteers

Seattle Bisexual Women's Network



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SBWN can always use volunteers to help with a variety of tasks. Give us a call or talk to a facilitator at a meeting.

North Bi Northwest is available by subscription (see above) or at area bookstores and newsstands, including: in Seattle, **Red and Black Books, Beyond the Closet, Bailey Coy Books, Fremont Place Book Company**, and **Toys in Babeland**.

North Bi Northwest is a publication of the Seattle Bisexual Women's Network, a member project of Gay Community Social Services, PO Box 2228, Seattle, WA 98122-0228. (*Not for corresponence with* SBWN *or North Bi Northwest*).

From the

Editor...

Hello! We're back! We have been unable to publish this newsletter since the beginning of the year due to a lack of volunteers. Welcome to our new editorial team. Reader contributions are needed to keep the content of this newsletter varied and the quality high. We accept original stories, poems, movie and book reviews (even old movies not just newly released ones) , drawings, photographs, news items, event announcements, and yes, advertisements. Anything that might be of interest to the bi community is welcome.

Our non-profit umbrella, Gay Community Social Services, is in need of volunteers to serve on their Board of Directors. Meetings are once a month in the evening and a commitment of at least one year is requested. GCSS also needs a person to serve as the Board Coordinator, which is a paid position. If you are interested please contact Eileen at 206-725-4470 or Jackie at 206-725-6530.

Come and march with us at Seattle Gay Pride on June 29, 1997 or drop by and visit with friendly Bi folks at our booth at the Festival. Our wonderful volunteers will be selling bi-buttons, photo magnets (of naked body parts), SBWN tee shirts with a nifty bi-symbol. Leilani will be doing massages for an affordable fee. Cyprienne, that's me, will be selling suggestive fimo pendants. Stop bi and say "Hi". I look forward to meeting you all.

I want to thank all the women of SBWN who helped me put this issue together. A special thanks to my husband, Brad, for his computer expertise, hard work and time-sharing of equipment and for putting up with all my bitching and groaning and moaning.

Cyprienne

we struggle to maintain on a daily basis. We expect ourselves and others to "be out and proud" despite how we may feel about ourselves. I am not sure that this is a valid expectation. How can one be proud of her sexual orientation when despairing over her personality? This is further complicated by the fact that, as women, whether straight or queer, our sexuality and sexual orientation is something we are specifically told to be ashamed of. At first I thought self-empowerment lies at the end of my path like Oz at the end of the yellow brick road. Like the lion, however, I can only find my courage along the way.

This, of course, brings up new questions. Like, "what if there are other things that I am proud of that have nothing to do with my sexual orientation?" Yes, I am proud to be queer-but it does not define my existence. There are a lot of other things in my life that are an integral part of "who I am". Things I probably spend much more time and effort

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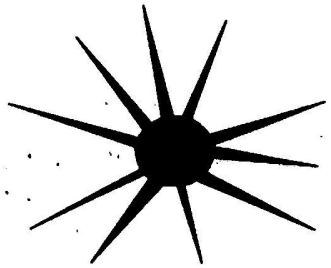


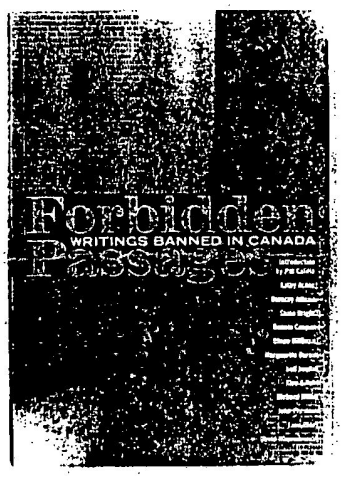
Book Reviews by Leilani

THE REPENTANCE OF LORRAINE
By Andrei Codrescu

In my search for erotic material with a plot, I stumbled across this book. The love triad of a would-be writer, a college professor's wife, and a college student was my original source of attraction. However, the epic search across Europe for a legendary erotic artifact was quite engaging.

The sex of the threesome is definitely lusty but not even close to what I'd call written porn. Sex is woven through the story; as it is should be. A little bonus involves a hint of submission/dominance and someone's idea of communist sex. You will have to read the book to find out what that means.

FORBIDDEN PASSAGES
Writings Banned in Canada
Introduction by Pat Califia



When I spent a weekend in Canada a year ago, I bought a book banned in the U.S. When I returned to the U.S., I bought this book. "Forbidden Passages features excerpts from some of the most significant publications seized at the Canadian border as sexually "degrading," "obscene" or politically suspect." Cleis Press, the publisher. When in Vancouver, B.C., I visited the bookstore, Little Sister's. This book was published to help them raise funds for their recent litigation against Canadian Customs (in excess of $200,000).

The articles in this book include erotica, essays, and artwork, but the point to me is censorship. Even if you don't agree or like everything in this book, shouldn't you have the right to read it? I think the strongest statement we make is how we spend our precious dollars.

"If you buy only one gay or feminist book this year, it should be Forbidden Passages. Because Forbidden Passages represents a vital struggle to keep gay and feminist books in circulation. If we lose this battle because the justice system is homophobic, that will be tragic. But if we lose it because we as a community could not raise enough money to pursue all the legal options of self-defense that are available to us, we should just put our hand in our pockets and quit pretending to care about any kind of social change or progress. Buy this book, hold a benefit, make a donation, Gag the state, before it chokes you!" - Pat Califia

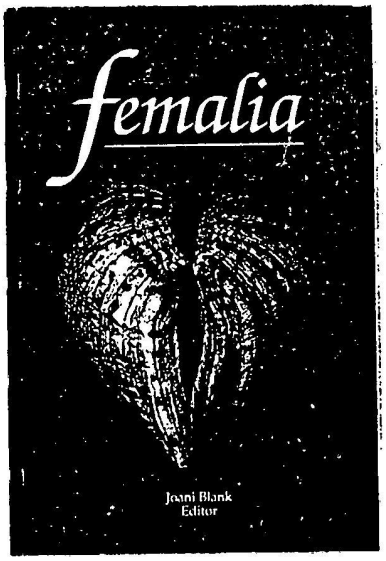
THE SECOND COMING
A Leatherdyke Reader
Edited by Pat Califia and Robin Sweeney

This book is a much awaited sequel to the landmark Coming to Power: Writings and Graphics on Lesbian S/M. This descendent covers similar areas: intense sexuality, politics and culture of leatherwomen. Several contributing authors are Seattle locals. I found the essays on transgenderism, disability/accessibility, bisexuals, play party etiquette, polyfidelity, and negotiating of great interest. The fiction ranges from light s/m to heavy anything goes. The poetry and photographs are provocative to say the least. I also enjoyed reading

the s/m theory section and the history of support groups.

This book does include separatism and material that would definitely be offensive to some. But I enjoy reading material that would be censored by many. It opens my mind, teaches me, and links me to other kinky women.

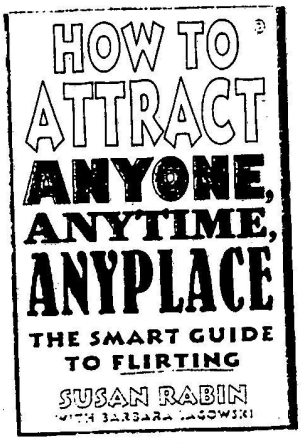
FEMALIA
Edited by Joani Blank



This book is made up of thirty two different color photographs of vulvas without any distracting words. You will find an introduction, a map labeling the parts of the vulva, and a bibliography. These are the best close-ups of women's genitals of varying ages, shapes, and colors. The value of this book for reference, education, and art are obvious. It may also inspire some to get out their hand mirrors and view their own beauty.

"You will find these images some of the most beautiful you've ever seen, or be shocked by them. This is a magic mirror letting you know exactly how you feel about female genitalia. It's a perfect coffee table book." -Annie Sprinkle, Performance Artist

HOW TO ATTRACT ANYONE, ANYTIME, ANYPLACE
The Smart Guide to Flirting
by Susan Rabin with Barbara Lagowski



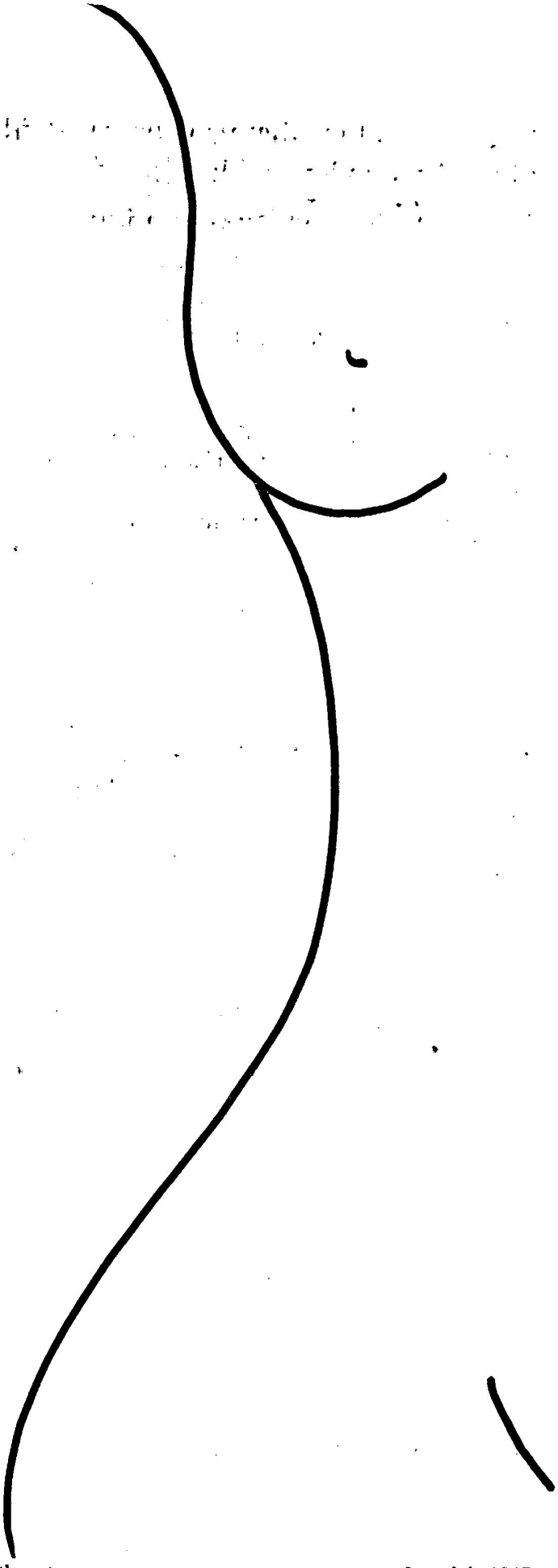
How to spark a conversation with that attractive stranger? How to figure out body language including eye contact? Where to meet people? When to make the move and when not to? How to communicate effectively non-verbally? What to say after you've said hello?

Susan Rabin answers all these crucial questions and provides practical steps to becoming the true flirt inside of us all. If you are already an experienced flirt, you will still find invaluable information and strategies. This book is more about connecting with other people and making conversation with those around you than it is about finding a mate. I found the information could easily be applied to anyone regardless of gender.

After reading this book, I indeed found myself talking to strangers. I began almost immediately practicing the tools outlined in the book. Some of which I had already discovered in my own flirting experience. But now I had this new excitement and energy, as if I had not yet begun to flirt. I found most people were friendly and receptive. I have made several new friends, had delicious flirting episodes, and have a new confidence facing a group strangers.

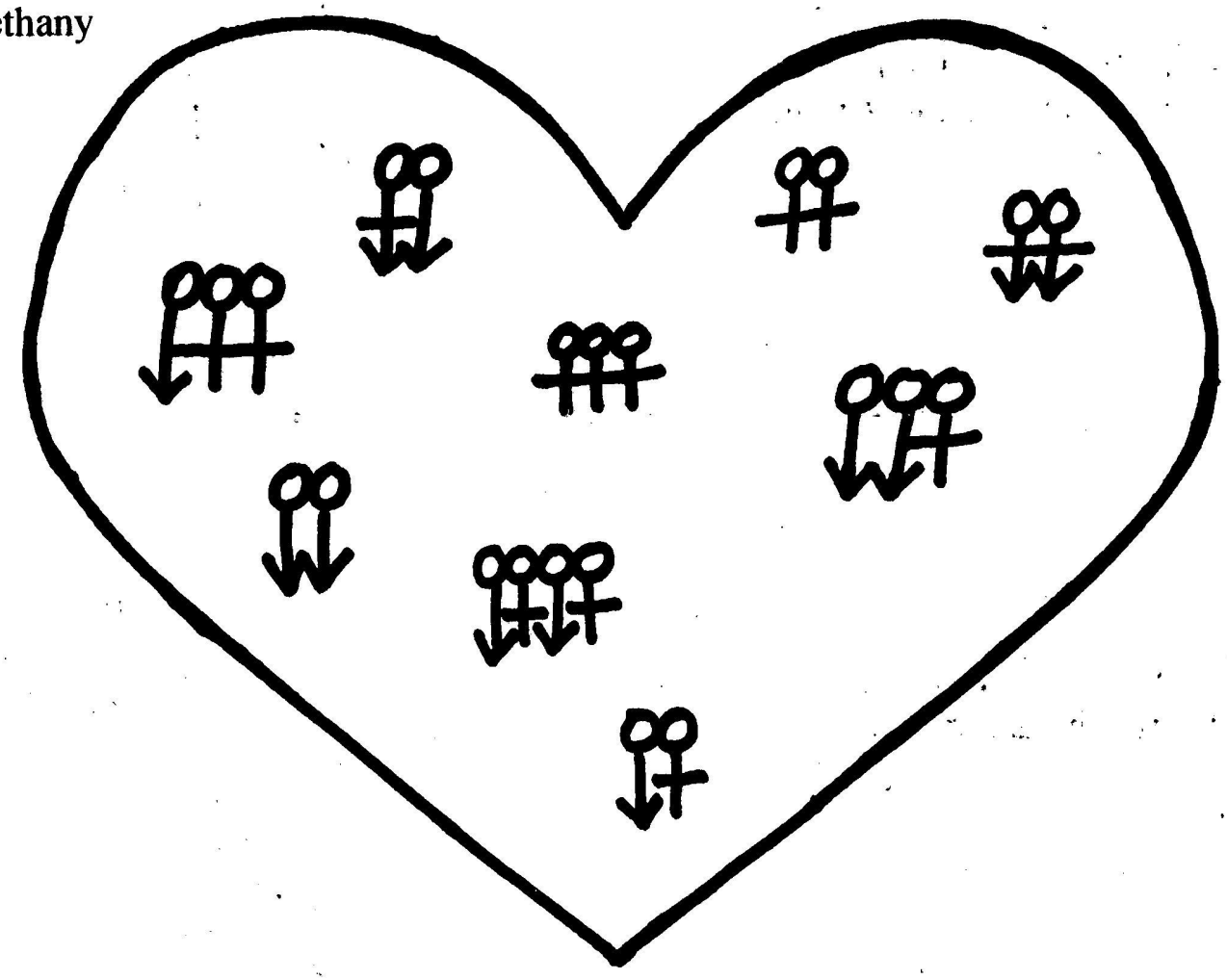
I can't help looking at you the way I do,
I want to touch and feel every part of you,
I want to lie in bed with you for days
And listen to the pouring rain,
And listen to Ani sing,
Candles scattered everywhere,
Stars in the sky and stars in your eyes,
I've never felt this way about
Another woman before and let me
Just say – WOW!
I look at you and I see a Goddess,
Your hands, your hair, your heart,
Your legs and breasts and soul.
For me to tell you seems impossible
(To tell anyone) I have dreams.
Your hand caresses my breast
As we speak in mumbled breaths,
Your lips taste like honey
And I can't stop kissing you there
And everywhere,
Your love, a hallucinogen.
I close my eyes and I see
Bright red butterflies.
But then I open them and realize
That it was only a dream,
And I can't tell anyone,
I can't tell you,
And not telling means
Not being able to be with you,
And not being able to be
With you means hurting.
My heart is breaking in two.

Bethany



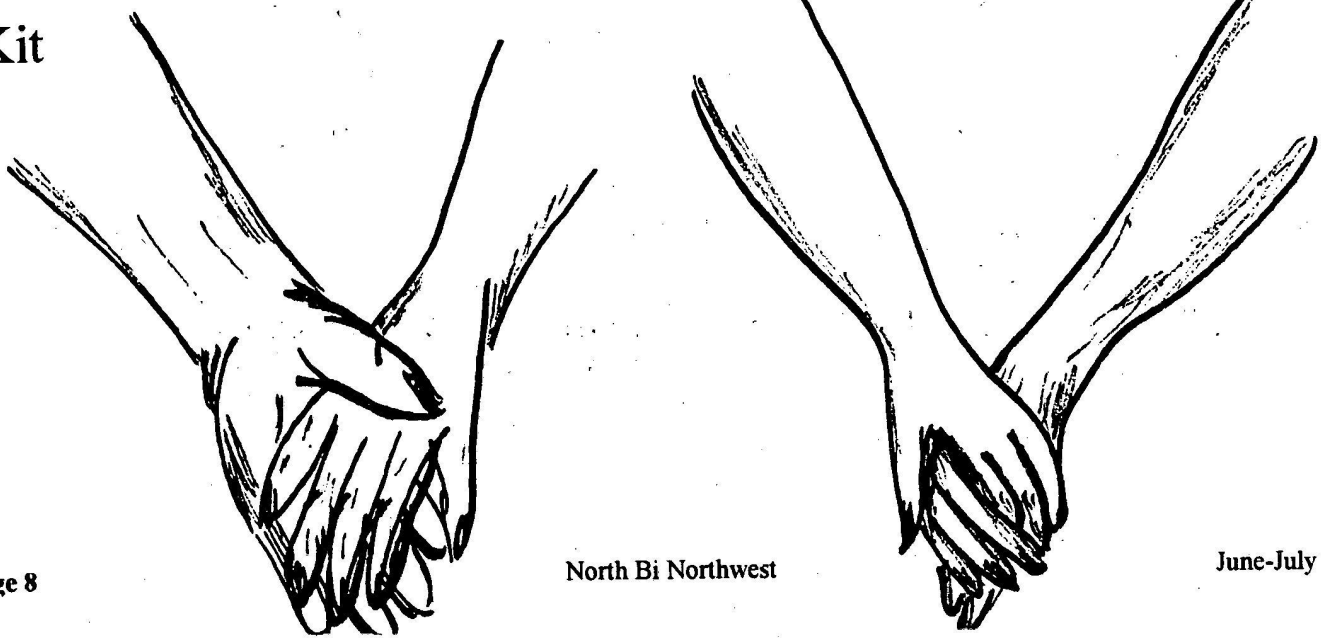
Don't look at me that way there's nothing wrong with me.
I have been in love with men,
And now I have crushes on women.
I want to scream out loud,
And tell every homophobe, racist,
Sexist, misogynist to Fuck Off and drop dead.
I want to be able to respect myself,
Accept myself for what I am.
But society won't let me.
Well....
Fuck Society!
I've woken up from this sugar-coated dream.
I am what I am.
Either deal with it or get the hell out of my way.

Bethany



As I lie here with my eyes closed warmly
Covered by our overstuffed comforter, my
Mind wanders softly through my thoughts,
    Our children are playing quietly,
    A distant neighbor mows his lawn,
    Will we have breakfast in or go out,
As my eyes open they are filled with the
Warm mornings glow reflecting off the
Newly painted walls, my awareness becomes
Focused on your presence. Our bodies
Intertwined, the way our souls must be.
There is no need to look at the time, our
Hunger will govern us,
    A soft kiss,
    A quiet exchange of good morning,
    A touch,
    A long cat-like stretch,
    A deep affectionate sigh,
I'm aware that Sunday morning is my
Favorite.

Kit



It takes you hours to get ready when we go out, there are all those
Gels and sprays for your hair and the first three perfectly fine
Outfits lay discarded on the bed, while your love of perfume is
Wonderful for everyone around you, it does require that you try
Every one of them at the fragrance counter. All of this while I shower
And dress in the first thing I pick out and am happy with the clean
Smell of my deodorant soap.

Your habit of keeping the saw and the power drill next to the tea
Service set in the kitchen might just have put me off, but then there was
My habit of color coordinating your underwear and socks that
Could have driven someone with less than your character into a
Ravenous frenzy.

When we're in line at the check-out stand, I'm likely to bury myself in
The headlines on the news stand, while you'll entertain yourself with
The next customer's baby for hours if need be.

The day you came home with those heavy black biker boots as your
Fashion find, I wondered if my leather oxfords would still be
Acceptable for kicking around town together.

I can tell you why the sky is blue and the grass is green in great detail
But when it comes to fixing my car, you are the expert, however the
Only thing I really want to know is where to put the gas or better yet
Where you'll be putting it.

One of life's finer things is coming home after a long day to a few
Moments with my feet up and my mind lost in the day's paper. While my
Nose is filled with the wonderful smells drifting from the kitchen as
You lovingly remind me that dinner will be ready soon.

We aren't much alike and we don't follow any well defined gender
Roles, but when all is said and done, we do love being a couple that is
Full of diversity and love.

Kit

News & Announcements

Northwest Bisexuals Host Annual Gather

Northwest bisexuals will hold their sixth annual gathering and campout over Labor Day Weekend, August 27 - September 2,1997, in the Wenatchee National Forest near Mt. Rainier National Park in Washington state.

The gathering, sponsored by the Bisexual Network of Oregon (BiNet), will be held at a secluded campground between the Bumping and the American rivers, 23 miles east of Chinook Pass and Mt. Rainier National Park. The gathering has attracted campers from as far away as Massachusetts and New Mexico. Campers may come for any portion of the Wednesday evening through Tuesday morning gathering. All bisexuals and their guests are welcome.

For information contact BiNet Oregon at (503) 703-8013, or (206) 517-7767 and leave a message for Lizabeth.

SAFER SEX STUDY

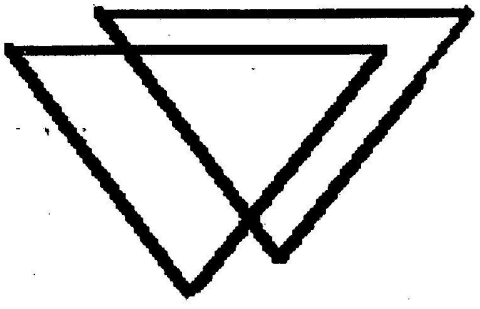
Women who have had sex with women and men at any time from 1988 to present needed to complete anonymous confidential survey of safer sex practices. Contact Barbara Nicely, M.A., P.O. Box 594, Northfield, OH 44067 or leave message (216) 467-6442 (9am – 9pm Eastern time).

New Store Opens

Venus, a full-figured consignment clothing store for women and men, has opened on Pike street, in the heart of Capitol Hill. Featuring a large selection of clothing and accessories, Venus caters to those who wear sizes 14/34 and up, which are the hardest to find when shopping for new and used clothing. Venus also buys and trades.

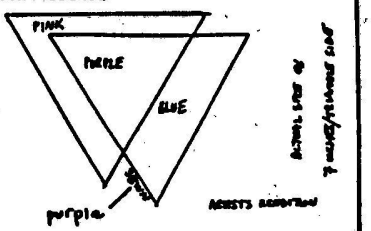
Venus is located at 1017 E. Pike St., downstairs, between the Wildrose and Cafe Paradiso and there is a parking lot located behind the building. Hours are 2-6 p.m. Wednesday and Thursday, 2-7 p.m. Friday, noon-7 p.m. Saturdays and noon-6 p.m. on Sundays, closed on Mondays and Tuesdays. If you are looking to clean out your closet or looking for a piece of clothing that is casual, formal, kinky or elegant, think of coming to Venus!

Venus Consignment Shop: (206)322-5539
Julia Kaplan: (206)325-6162



THE BISEXUAL LOGO T-SHIRT!
AVAILABLE IN TWO COLORS: BLACK AND HEATHER GREY. SIZES ARE LARGE, X-LARGE, AND OVER-SIZE (APPROZIMATELY 4X-LARGE). PRICED AT $12 EACH, SBWN MEMBWERS MAY BI THE SHIRTS FOR ONLY $10 (A 15% SAVINGS, WE TOLD YOU MEMBERSHIP HAS ITS PRIVILEGES!)

GET THEM AT SBWN MEETINGS AND AT NATIONAL COMING OUT DAY CELEBRATIONS. WE CAN ALSO MAIL THEM FOR AN ADDITIONAL $2 POSTAGE AND HANDLING.



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developing. Does being a "proud queer" eclipse the other definitive parts of my life? Unfortunately, in our society, that is often what happens.

So maybe my path is not as bright as I thought is was. Well at least here in Seattle it is still wide...hmm...maybe I should look again. I'm not out to my dad—so what—big deal. He probably knows anyway. I have never talked to him before about who I date, why start now? He treats my lovers like family anyway-why mess that up? Mom is struggling enough to handle this, no need to rock the boat. Is there? Would it change my dad? Would it help? I see others who have struggled with their families, been kicked out or rejected and wonder if I am willing to support them by taking my own risks? How can I change the world if I can't change my parents?

My mother says "Choose your battles - you can't conquer every problem." But, how much leeway do I really have to choose? Are the situations when I choose NOT to battle any less important than when I choose to take up the fight? It takes energy to educate, it takes courage to fight and everything carries its own risk. How often do I even stop to consider how I make those decisions?

At work--how "out" is "out" enough? On the one hand, I think "who I am dating has nothing to do with my work." In fact my personal life may even be inappropriate to bring up at work at all. Why force the issue? Why choose this battle? But then I stop to consider my path and wonder if I'm being "smart" or just being afraid. I know at some level it must matter. If it doesn't matter, why do I get so excited when I meet someone queer in my field? Surely there are others out there wondering, like I have, if they are alone.

I have no answers to offer, only questions. I have found it is too easy to take however "out" I am for granted. But, unless I stop and really look at my path I cannot know exactly where I am walking. How can we expect to combat social ignorance if we ignore the road beneath our feet?

Wherever you are on your pride path I hope you will stop this Pride Day and look about.

May the road always rise up to meet you. May the wind be always at your back.

Editors note: We encourage each of our readers to share their path with us. We will print as many as possible in the next newsletter. ♥

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MEMBER ABMP

CALENDAR

For locations, confirmations, or more information, call the appropriate message machine and someone will get back to you (with discretion if requested). For **SBWN** events call **(206)517-7767**. For all other Seattle events, (**BiNet, SBMU, Polyfi, BiOut**, etc.) Call (206)728-4533.

***denotes mulit-gender events. $=not a free event**

Mon. Jun 9 - SBWN Mtg. 6:30pm *Love and Sex Questions*

Mon. Jun 9 - SBMU Mtg. 7pm.

Fri. Jun 13 - BiNet Social, 7pm, Beyond the Edge Cafe

Sun. Jun 15 - SBWN Mtg. 6:30pm. *"Hey Dad I'm Queer"*

Sat. Jun 21 - BiNet Support Mtg. 7pm.

Sat Jun 21 - Dancing at The Easy, meet at 9:30pm on Bar side

Mon Jun 23 - Good Summer Reading - please bring your favorites!

Fri. Jun 27 - BiNet Social, 7pm. Beyond the Edge Cafe

Sun. Jun 29 - Pride Potluck at 6pm, after the parade and rally, Volunteer Park behind the SAAM

Sat. Jul 5 - BiNet Support Mtg. 7pm.

Mon. Jul 7 - SBWN Mtg. 6:30pm *Aromatherapy*

Fri. Jul 11 - BiNet Social 7pm. Beyond the Edge Cafe

Sat July 12 - Poly Fi potluck 6:30pm., Pilgrim Congregational Church.

Sun. Jul 13 - SBWN Mtg. 6:30pm. *Social and Organizational*

Mon. Jul 14 - SBMU Mtg. 7pm.

Sat. Jul 19 - BiNet Support Mtg. 7Pm

Sat. Jul 19 - Dancing at The Easy, meet at 9:30pm on Bar side

Mon. Jul 21 - SBWN Mtg. 6:30pm. *Open Rap*

Fri. Jul 25 - BiNet Social 7pm. Beyond the Edge Cafe.

Sun. Jul 27 - SBWN Mtg. 6:30pm. *Open Rap*

Sat. Aug 2 - *BiNet Support Mtg 7pm*

Mon. Aug 4 - SBWN Mtg. 6:30pm *Aromatherapy*

Fri. Aug 8 - BiNet Social 7pm. Beyond the Edge Cafe

Sun. Aug 10 - SBWN Mtg. 6:30pm. *Topic TBA*

Mon. Aug 11 - SBMU Mtg. 7pm

Sat. Aug 16 - Dancing at The Easy, meet at 9:30pm on Bar side

Upcoming Events:

Labor Day Weekend: August 29-September 1 - BiNet Campout, American Ridge, with BiNet Oregon, Vancouver BC, and others. Call Lizabeth or the BiLine for more info.

PEOPLE NEEDN'T BE BISEXUAL TO PARTICIPATE IN ANY OF THE ABOVE GROUPS; ONE NEEDS ONLY TO BE NON-BI-HOSTILE, AND OUGHT TO BE AT LEAST A BIT ENTERTAINING AND FRIENDLY.

Local Groups at your Service

SBWN (Seattle Bisexual Women's Network): Support and discussion groups on alternate Sundays and alternate Mondays at 6:30pm. For more information, call our message machine. Note our NEW telephone number: 517-7767.

SBWN's Social Crowd meets on the first Friday of the month for dancing at Sappho's, 9:30pm. And on the third Saturday of the month for dancing at The Easy, 10pm. All are welcome.

SBMU (Seattle Bisexual Men's Union): a men's anti-sexist support and social group with discussion meetings on second Mondays of the month at Pilgrim Congregational Church, room 304 (enter from 10th Ave.), and monthly social events (location varies).

Polyfidelity Discussion Group: Support group and community for people in or interested in multipartner relationships. Discussions and literature on responsible nonmonogamy, intimate networks, alternative relationships and community. Bimonthly potluck discussions, 6:30pm @ Pilgrim Congregational Church, 509 10th Ave E, Seattle; alternate month social events, venue varies.

BiNet, the Bisexual Network of Seattle: a multi-gender, multicultural, profeminist group. Support meetings every first and third Saturday of the month; call for location. Social meetings every 2nd and 4th Friday of the month, at Beyond the Edge Cafe, 703 E. Pike, 7-9pm. Call 728-4533 to get involved.

BiOut Speakers Bureau: available for engagements at schools, businesses, counseling centers, churches, etc. to provide information and answers about bisexuality.